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Brentwood
Urban District Council



ANNUAL
REPORT

OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1925.

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ST. THOMAS ROAD,
BRENTWOOD.



Brentwood Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

TO THE
CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE URBAN
DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit my Annual Report on the Sanitary Condition and Administration of the District for the year 1925.—

In accordance with a circular issued by the Ministry of Health to Sanitary Authorities, Annual Reports of a full and detailed character (referred to as "Survey Reports") are required every five years. In other years the Annual Reports will be of a more simple character (referred to as Ordinary Reports) giving certain indicated particulars as a minimum requirement.

The Annual Report for 1925 is a Survey Report and the information is specified in a certain order and under special headings, in accordance with the most recent instructions of the Ministry of Health.

Since my first report to you for the year 1899, many changes have taken place in the field of preventive medicine. Each decade has seen many additional duties placed upon Local Health Officers, and scarcely a year has passed but that some Act or Order has been issued aiming at the improvement of the Public Health machinery. Experience has shown that all measures which have been promoted for the social betterment of the community, have invariably been accompanied by improved Public Health legislation.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

The Urban Authority of Brentwood was constituted in April, 1899, and consists of the old parish of Brentwood and has an

Area of 460 acres

Population (Census, 1921) 6910.

Population (Estimated, 1925) 7072.

The town is situated on an elevated position on the main road between London and Colchester, six miles from Romford and eleven from Chelmsford, and is bounded by the parishes of South Weald, Shenfield and Great Warley. The parts of these parishes which immediately adjoin Brentwood are of an urban character and for the purpose of drainage, a Special Drainage District has been formed and connected with the Brentwood System.

At the time of the formation of the Urban Authority in 1899, it was contemplated to include in the Urban District, the thickly populated portions of the parishes immediately adjoining Brentwood but the scheme was not carried out. As a result the town is practically divided into two parts, one part being administered as an Urban Authority and the other part controlled by two different Rural Authorities located six or seven miles away. Under these circumstances the Urban District Council of Brentwood, in the year 1914, petitioned the Essex County Council for an alteration of the boundary of their district so as to include the thickly populated portions of the surrounding parishes which immediately adjoin Brentwood.

In the early part of 1915, the County Council held an Inquiry and without comment rejected the proposal. No reason was assigned why the scheme was not entertained and the decision remains a matter for speculation and food for reflection. However, Brentwood had to pay the costs of the Inquiry and is obliged to put up with the anomalous situation, and the unsatisfactory conditions depending thereon. The rejection of this scheme by the County Council was no doubt a disappointment keenly felt by the promoters and will always tend to make them feel chary about proposing improvements which might very possibly result in useless expenditure and disappointed aspirations.

The nature of the soil is somewhat varied ; the western and northern parts being principally clay, and the remainder for the most part sand and gravel. The town is situated on the edge of the London Basin and as a result water appears as springs at some of the most elevated points. The surface water drains into the Ingrebourne Brook. The upper part of High Street is 357 feet above ordnance datum, and the lowest point is near Kavanagh Bridge, where the ground level is 202 feet above ordnance datum. A large number of the residents have their occupations in London and Chelmsford,

whilst the remainder are employed chiefly in the different places of business and workshops in and surrounding the district.

There are no large Manufacturies or Works in the district, the principal industries being :—

Brick-making and Bitumen Grout Manufacture.

There is no trade carried on, which can be said to have a deleterious effect upon the Public Health or upon the health of the individual engaged therein.

Number of inhabited houses (1921)	1421
Number of families or separate occupiers (1921) not available	
Rateable value	£38,957
Sum represented by a penny rate	£160

It is interesting to mention here that the Institutions contribute a large proportion of the population, and as the birth-rate is calculated on the whole population, it is well to bear this in mind. The populations of the institutions are as follows :—

Hackney Branch Institution	354
Highwood Tuberculosis Hospital	423
St. Charles School	125
Ursuline Schools	138
Convent of Mercy (2 houses)	106
Jewish Homes	45
Grammar School (in Urban District)	42
Convalescent Home	16

VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth Rate.—There were 111 children born, whose parents belonged to the district, 62 being boys and 49 girls. Of these, 3 boys and 4 girls were illegitimate. The population (as given by the Registrar-General) being 7072 the birth rate per thousand of the whole population would be 15.7.

Bearing in mind, however, that the inmates of the Institutions mentioned above do not for the most part belong to Brentwood and are circumstantially and naturally debarred from being a potential factor in calculating the actual birth rate. I think the population of these institutions might fairly be deducted from the whole population for the purpose of making a corrected birth rate. Calculating on these lines the corrected birth rate would be 19.1.

The birth rates for the last five years were as follows :—

1921	18.3
1922	16.2
1923	15.6
1924	13.7
1925	15.7
Average for five years	15.9

Death Rate.—There were 83 deaths of persons belonging to the district, 43 males and 40 females which is equivalent to a death rate of 11.73 per 1000 persons living. The death rates for the last five years were as follows :—

1921	...	...	...	12.2
1922	...	...	...	8.2
1923	...	...	...	10.
1924	...	...	...	9.9
1925	...	...	...	11.73
Average for five years				10.4

The following table shows the deaths at various ages :—

Under one year of age	...	...	4
One year and under two	...	...	1
2 years	„	„	5
5	„	„	15
15	„	„	25
25	„	„	45
45	„	„	65
65	„	„	upwards
			51
Total for all ages			83

There were no deaths of women in consequence of childbirth.

Infant Mortality.—There were four deaths of children under one year of age, two were boys and two girls. Of these, two were illegitimate, one boy and one girl. The number of births being 111 the Infant Mortality would be therefore 36 per 1000 births.

The Infant Mortality for the last five years was as follows :—

1921	...	...	...	78.7
1922	...	...	...	17.4
1923	...	...	...	82.
1924	...	...	...	61.8
1925	...	...	...	36.
Average for 5 years				55.2

It is noteworthy that there is a great decrease in the Infant Mortality which was much below the average for the last five years.

The following table shows the nett deaths from stated causes at various ages under one year of age.

Cause of Death.	Under 1 week	1 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	6 to 12 months
Broncho-Pneumonia	—	—	1	—
Prematurity	1	—	—	—
Gastro-enteritis	—	—	—	1
Whooping Cough	—	1	—	—
Totals	1	1	1	1

There is no Institution in the district where gratuitous medical relief can be obtained.

The amount of Poor Law relief for Brentwood during the year 1925 is set forth as follows :—

Unemployed Relief	£65
Ordinary Out Relief	£1,320
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Total Out Relief	£1,385
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The number of persons relieved on an average per week, during the year were as follows :—

	Men	Women	Children	Total
On account of sickness or accident ...	9	14	13	36
On „ „ Medical Relief only ...	3	6	4	13
On „ „ relief to men out of } work, widows with children, &c. }	3	27	16	46
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Totals	15	47	33	95
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There has been a marked tendency upward in the relieved during the past five years.

More advantage is taken of the Infirmary Accommodation and there is less reluctance to enter the Infirmary on account of it being a Poor Law Hospital.

The numbers of admissions to the Infirmary during 1925 from Brentwood on account of sickness or accident that is apart from admissions to the Workhouse (on account of destitution and other causes) were :—

Men 16, Women 14, Children 2, Total 32
which includes 3 admissions for confinements.

There were no cases of sickness or invalidity specially noteworthy in the district during the period under review.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

Hospitals.—The Council have an agreement with Billericay Rural Authority whereby infectious cases are received and treated at the Billericay Isolation Hospital. This hospital which has an accommodation of 22 beds is outside the district and is situated about five miles from Brentwood.

Smallpox cases are provided for by an arrangement with the West Ham Authority whereby such cases would be received into the Smallpox hospital at Orsett.

There is no institutional provision in the district for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants or homeless children.

Ambulance Facilities.—There is an arrangement with the Billericay Authority whereby infectious cases are removed to the Isolation Hospital in the Ambulance belonging to Billericay. There is an ambulance provided by the British Red Cross Society whereby cases of accident and other ailments not of an infectious nature are removed to hospital on payment of running charges.

Nursing.—There are two district nurses who attend confinements and certain general ailments but not infectious diseases.

There are four registered midwives who practice in the district one of whom is also a district nurse. There are no clinics provided by the Local Authority the duty being undertaken by the County Council.

The Sanitary Officials are the Medical Officer (who is a part time Officer) and the Sanitary Inspector, who also acts as Surveyor and is a whole time Officer. Contributions to the salaries of the M.O.H. and Sanitary Inspector are made under the provisions of the Public Health Acts.

Legislation in Force :—

Legislation in Force.—*The Adopted Acts are :—*

Infectious Diseases (Prevention of) Act, 1890.

The Public Health (Amendment) Act, 1890, Part III.

The Private Street Works Act, 1892.

The Bye-Laws are :—

Keeping of Animals, Removal of Refuse, &c.

Lodging Houses.

Regulations under “Dairy and Cowsheds Order.”

Tents, Vans, Sheds, &c.

Public Conveniences.

Slaughterhouses.

New Streets and Buildings (Revised July, 1925).

Laboratory Work.—Bacteriological specimens are sent in practically all suspected cases of infectious disease by the Medical Attendant for examination, to the County Laboratory.

Antitoxin is supplied free by the Council in necessary cases on application by the Medical Attendant.

The provision of “The Sale of Foods and Drugs Acts,” are carried out by the County Council whose Inspector is Mr. Arthur Horsnell to whom I am indebted for the following particulars :—

Samples taken in Brentwood under "The Food and Drugs Acts" for the year ending 31st December, 1925 :—

Milk	...	...	...	20
Cream	...	...	...	3
Cheese	...	...	...	1
Scotch Whisky	...	...	...	1
Butter	...	...	...	10
Margarine	...	...	...	10
Lard	...	...	...	10
Tea	...	...	...	1
				—
Total				56
				—

With the exception of one milk sample, which was found to be 24 per cent. deficient in milk fat, and one sample of cream, which contained preservative and was not labelled to that effect, all the samples were found to be genuine.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply.—The town has a constant supply of water from the South Essex Waterworks Company. Samples are taken periodically and examined at the County Laboratory. Practically in all cases where the water is supplied by the Company, the water for drinking purposes is taken direct from the main. Altogether there are eight houses in which water is obtained from other sources. Of these, two are supplied from two springs, and the other six from four wells. These springs and wells are kept under observation. There are 36 standpipes for 80 cottages, as follows :—

- 1 for nine cottages in Cottage Place.
- 1 for seven cottages in Careful Place and Ropers Yard.
- 1 for Lodginghouse in Roper's Yard.
- 7 for fourteen cottages in Crown Square.
- 8 for fifteen cottages in South Street.
- 1 for five cottages in King Road.
- 4 for seven cottages in Ingrave Road.
- 3 for eight cottages in Western Road.
- 1 for four cottages in Ongar Road.
- 9 for ten cottages in Railway Square.

During the year five houses which were supplied from standpipes, have had the water laid on over the sinks and to the flushing apparatus in W.C.'s. There are no public wells in use in the District and no new wells have been sunk. Two wells have been closed and water from the Waterworks Company laid on.

Rivers and Streams.—There are none in the District.

Drainage and Sewerage.—The outfall Sewers and the Sewage Disposal Works are under the control of a Joint Committee, which is composed of nine members, six representing Brentwood Urban Council and three representing Billericay Rural District Council. The system is not under the supervision of the Medical Officer of Health. The town sewers are all stoneware pipes and are in a satisfactory condition. The surface water is for the most part discharged into a small water-course which runs between Brentwood and the parishes of Shenfield and South Weald, and which eventually empties into the Ingrebourne Brook. Generally speaking the District as regards drainage and sewerage, is adequately served.

Closet Accommodation.—Water-closets with flushing apparatus are supplied in the large majority of the houses in the District. There are 1,397 W.C.'s with proper flushing apparatus, and 341 are hand-flushed. That is, there are about 20 per cent. hand-flushed water-closets in the whole District. At the time of my last report the percentage was 27. There are no waste water-closets in the District and no privy. There are three cottages in isolated positions with pail closets. These cottages are so situated that connection to the drainage system is hardly practicable.

Scavenging.—The arrangement for removal of house refuse in vogue for some years not being in every way satisfactory, the Council in June last, provided two one-ton covered motor vans for the removal of both house and trade refuse by direct labour which is taken to the Sewage Farm, collected in a heap and burnt. The refuse is cleared regularly once a week from all houses and in the case of some of the large Institutions twice weekly. So far, this arrangement has proved satisfactory. Movable ashbins with proper covering are used throughout the District. During the year notices for the supply of 188 bins were served and 171 were supplied at the end of the year.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.—General inspection is carried out during the year and the Inspector makes detailed notes of every defect found. It is to the credit of the Sanitary Inspector that notwithstanding the amount of work devolving upon him under the housing schemes, he has kept pace with his sanitary duties though naturally the routine inspections have somewhat suffered.

The following table prepared by him, gives the information desired by the Minister of Health :—

Nuisances in hand at close of year 1924 ...	...	4
Inspections made during the year 1925 ...	...	466
Nuisances in hand at close of year 1925 ...	...	24
Nuisances detected or reported to Council, year 1925...	...	165
Nuisances abated or reported during 1925 ...	...	145
Informal notices served, 1925 ...	...	101

Informal notices complied with, 1925	...	...	87
Statutory notices served, 1925	...	...	6
Statutory notices complied with, 1925	...	...	6

Legal Proceedings.—One adjourned summons from previous year was dismissed.

Premises and Occupations Controlled by Bye-laws.—There are three Common Lodginghouses, six Bakehouses, five Slaughterhouses, six Dairies and Milkshops, which have all been periodically inspected and found satisfactory. There are no cellar dwellings and no offensive trades in the District. Besides the above there are 18 Factories, 48 Workshops and 7 Workplaces on the Register.

The following table gives the information required under the provisions of the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901 :—

1. INSPECTION OF FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, &c.

Premises	Inspections	Number of Written Notices
Factories (including Factory Laundries) ...	21	1
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries) ...	57	—
Workplaces (other than outworkers) ...	9	—
	—	—
	87	1
	—	—

2. DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars	Found	Number of defects Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector
Nuisances under Public Health Acts :			
Want of cleanliness	5	5	—
Other Nuisances	7	7	—
Sanitary Accommodation :—			
Insufficient	2	2	—
Defective	3	3	—
Offences under Factory and Workshops Acts :			
Breach of Sanitary Requirements Bake-			
houses	—	—	—
Total	17	17	—
	—	—	—

Schools.—The schools are visited as a matter of routine during inspection. The water supply is taken from the Waterworks Company and is satisfactory. Some of the schools are provided with closets of the trough type, flushed by automatic tanks. The others are the washdown pedestal type with proper flushing apparatus. Provided the closets are kept clean the sanitary arrangements and water supply are satisfactory. The Medical inspection is undertaken by officials appointed by the County Council. When there is any prevalence of infectious disease in the District, the schools are visited, the names of the children who are absent ascertained and

every suspicious case is visited and any necessary advice tendered. The homes of children suspected of coming from dirty houses are promptly visited when such cases are reported to me. If a school has been closed on account of the prevalence of any infectious disorder the Inspector sees to the thorough disinfection of the premises directly it is closed so that the school may be well cleansed and aired before being opened.

HOUSING.

There can be no doubt that there is need for additional houses of the cottage type, as at the present time there is not one workman's dwelling unoccupied in the District.

Since 1920 the Council have erected 33 houses under the assisted Housing Scheme and ten bungalows and three cottages under the Subsidy Scheme, all of which are occupied. Besides these, 16 more bungalows were started during the past year and are now in course of erection and are all allocated to waiting applicants. During the year there was, owing to the scarcity of houses, a certain amount of overcrowding and in three cases action was taken to abate and complied with. Leaving out the large institutions, the number of persons per house is just about four and as more dwellings are erected, so the likelihood of serious overcrowding becomes less and less. At the present time, there is a number of old houses which are below the standard as regards structural conditions, up-to-date sanitary arrangements, and density, and the keeping of this old property in a reasonable state of repair is somewhat handicapped by the increased cost of both material and labour since the war. In some cases the defects are not only due to the age of the property but there is lack of proper supervisions by the owners and neglect by the tenants.

Housing Statistics.—The following tables give the details required by the Minister of Health :—

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a)	Total (including number given under (b),	38
(b)	With state assistance under Housing Acts	
(i.)	By local authority	... .. 13
(ii.)	By other bodies or persons	... .. 7

1. Unfit Dwelling Houses.

Inspection.—(1)	Total number of dwellings inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	... 52
(2)	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	... .. 36

(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	9
(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	21
2. Remedy of defects without Formal Notices.	
Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of Informal Action by Local Authority...	6
3. Action under Statutory Powers.	
A. (3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close (Housing Act, 1925)	9
B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.	
(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied, including notices for dust bins	197
(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By Owners	173
(b) By Local Authority	—
C. Proceedings under Sections 11, 14, and 15 of Housing Act, 1925.	
(1) Number representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	2
(2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made... ..	7
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined... ..	0
(4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	6
(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	6

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.—There has been no evidence of dirty milk or of dirty or untidy milkmen.

There has been no cause for complaint with regard to the wholesomeness of the milk and the general adequacy of the arrangements for the supply and distribution is quite satisfactory.

There are no dairy farms in the district and the milk is supplied principally from the six dairies which are kept under observation. One licence has been granted for the sale of Grade A Milk (T.B. Tested) and there has been no refusal or revocation of registration of retailers.

Meat and Other Foods.—Inspection of meat and other food is made and when slaughterhouses are visited any carcase or parts

thereof in the slaughterhouse or in the shop are examined. Cleaning up after slaughtering and prompt removal of offensive matters are on the whole satisfactory. Altogether slaughterhouses are fairly well maintained and the Bye-laws complied with. There is no public abbatoir in the district. The following table shows the number of slaughterhouses in use in the district at the dates mentioned :—

		1920.	January, 1925.	December, 1925.
Registered	...	2	2	2
Licensed	...	3	3	3
		—	—	—
Totals	...	5	5	5
		—	—	—

The bakehouses and other premises where foods are manufactured, prepared, stored or exposed for sale, are kept in a fairly good condition, cleansing and whitewashing being regularly and efficiently carried out.

The provisions of the “Sale of Foods and Drugs Act” are out by the County Council.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The prevalence of notifiable infectious diseases for the last five years is shown in the following table :—

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES FOR 5 YEARS (Other than Tuberculosis.)

Diseases	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	Total 5 years	Yearly Aver.
Scarlet Fever	17	20	30	9	37	113	22.6
Diphtheria	31	5	4	5	29	74	14.8
Erysipelas ...	1	0	2	2	1	6	1.2
Ophthal Neon	0	1	2	0	1	4	.8
Puerperal Fever	0	1	0	0	0	1	.2
Pneumonia ...	0	0	0	1	0	1	.2
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total Cases ...	49	27	38	17	68	199	39.8
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The following table gives particulars of notifiable diseases in the area during the year 1925 (other than tuberculosis) :—

Diseases	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total deaths.
Scarlet Fever	37	35	—
Diphtheria	29	27	1
Erysipelas	1	—	—
Ophthal Neon	1	—	—
	—	—	—
Totals ...	68	62	1
	—	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

The following table gives particulars of new cases of tuberculosis and of deaths from the disease during the year 1925.

Age Periods		New Cases				Deaths			
		Pulmonary M.	Pulmonary F.	Non-Pulmonary M.	Non-Pulmonary F.	Pulmonary M.	Pulmonary F.	Non-Pulmonary M.	Non-Pulmonary F.
5 Years, under	10	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	—
10 "	"	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
15 "	"	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
20 "	"	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
25 "	"	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35 "	"	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
45 "	"	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	...	5	2	1	2	2	1	0	0

There were ten cases of tuberculosis notified during the year, namely, seven pulmonary and three non-pulmonary. Of these there were three deaths from pulmonary tubercle, one of which occurred outside the district.

The above resumé of the sanitary condition of the district and the mortality and sickness statistics are on the whole satisfactory, but circumstances over which we have no control may occur any year, and cause excessive mortality from many diseases. However, sanitation has been advancing slowly but surely, and the increased knowledge, especially of the part played by bacteria in the causation of disease, has shown that many diseases, not of an infectious nature in the popular acceptation of the term, are due to these minute organisms invading the system. So long as the body remains in a perfectly healthy condition, the bacteria are to a large extent harmless and infection is resisted. Bacteria thrive best in the absence of light and in the presence of dirt. Everything therefore which promotes cleanliness and lets in the sunlight and fresh air, tends to produce conditions which not only diminish the number of bacteria, but also favour bodily health and vigour, thus rendering the whole system more capable of resisting infection.

Finally, I have to thank Mr. Meeson for his assistance at all times and especially in the preparation of this report, and you, Gentlemen, the Chairman and Members of the Council, for the courtesy which I invariably receive from you in the discharge of my duties.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

SAMUEL FRAZER,

Medical Officer of Health,

U.D.C. Brentwood.

May, 1926.

